

OCU's Meinders School of Business hosts buddhist conference

By Greg Horton | October 2, 2008

Buddhists from around Oklahoma will gather at Meinders School of Business on the Oklahoma City University campus Friday evening and all-day Saturday for the 10th annual [Oklahoma Buddhist Conference](#). The event is open to the public.

Maurice Hoover, co-chair of the conference planning committee, said the conference is not just for Buddhists. "Everyone is welcome," he said. "Buddhism deals with how the human mind and emotions work, so people of any or no faith can benefit from this."

The event is co-sponsored by the Wimberly School of Religion at OCU and the Buddhist Association of Oklahoma (BAO).

Oklahoma City has Buddhists from the three major traditions " Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana " as well as Zen Buddhists and individual practitioners. Hoover said all the groups would be represented at the conference.

This is also the first year in which the conference will be a two-day event. The conference begins Friday night with a film screening and follow-up discussion. The film, "Changing from the Inside," looks at a pilot meditation program in a state prison near Seattle. The discussion will feature a panel of Buddhists who work or volunteer in prisons, including Mark Maxey of Oklahoma City, whose organization, Dharma Seeds, provides meditation training and instruction to Oklahoma prison inmates.

SCHEDULE

Saturday's schedule includes two keynote speakers: Larry Ward and Bhante Kassapa. Ward is an ordained Dharma teacher, and has spent many years traveling and working with Thich Nhat Hanh, including peace missions to China, Korea and Vietnam. Kassapa is a Theravada Buddhist monk at the Buu Mon Buddhist Temple in Port Arthur, Texas. In addition to his work at the temple, Kassapa works as a chaplain at the federal correctional center in Beaumont, Texas. Kassapa will also participate in the Friday night discussion following the film.

Hoover said the Saturday schedule also included three guided meditation exercises and Dharma instruction.

"We wanted to provide participants an opportunity to actually practice meditation, rather than just receive instruction," Hoover said.

A panel discussion covering the conference theme of equanimity " meaning balance of mind " will take place in the afternoon. The panel is composed of four lay practitioners and two monastics, including Shifu Jian-Mao, the abbess of the Buddha Mind monastery in Oklahoma City.

Hoover said the theme of equanimity was chosen with the idea that it could help people remain poised and balanced in the middle of life's ups and downs.

"There are many things we can't control in life," Hoover said, "but we can remain balanced no matter what happens. Equanimity is not indifference, it's being aware of what's happening around you but having a broader perspective that comes from a deeper wisdom and compassion. It's to be informed,

but not controlled by life's circumstances.”

The Friday night event is free and open to the public. Saturday's event, which includes a vegetarian lunch, costs \$15 for students and \$20 for non-students. “Greg Horton



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